Today is Easter Sunday. What does that mean? Easter is the day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. After his crucifixion, death, and burial, three days later, Jesus was raised from the grave by the power of the Spirit of God because death could not hold him because he was sinless.

As Christians, we believe that through his resurrection, Jesus conquered death, giving the hope of eternal life to all who believe in him, the promise of a life beyond death.

Jesus made that very clear when he said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:26) Jesus was promising life beyond life. He told us that life as we know it is not all there is, but there is much more after this one.

So, Easter is an event that changed how we look at life and ourselves. For example, death is no longer a final destination but a passage. The uncertainty of what happens “next” is gone. A mortal body no longer binds us; instead, we are revived through faith in Jesus the Christ in this life for the next one.

This is explained by the apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:3-4,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you…”

This means that when we believe in Jesus and follow his teachings, we experience a revival and healing of our whole selves, and the joy of a life beyond death. It means that because Jesus lives, even as we still may struggle, we can live a good life today and face whatever challenges tomorrow may bring with complete confidence that in the end, all will be well.

For this, Easter changes everything! It changes how we live and understand life and make our decisions. For example, the pain and sorrow we experience are not the end. The loss and suffering we carry are not the end. The sadness and brokenness in our hearts are not the end. This means that death and all the sufferings in this world are wrong, and they are not the end.

In fact, the “end” does not exist with God because God is always doing new things to make things better. With God, everything can be healed and made right, and it will be.

The book of Revelation gives us a glimpse of this future when it says,

“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

That is what God is up to, and Jesus’ resurrection is just the beginning to make things right.

So, we are here today to remember and celebrate that Jesus made things right and is making things right in our lives even as we speak—in our family, relationships, children, community, and everywhere.

The story of the women who were the first to learn about Jesus’ resurrection gives us a powerful insight into this understanding. They were the first to experience this change. This is what happened on Sunday morning, three days after Jesus was dead and buried,

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.” (Luke 24: 1-9)

It is early Sunday morning, at dawn, and Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them came to the tomb to complete the burial rituals for Jesus’ body as was the Jewish custom.

There was no joy in this. Everything was wrong. They were coming in deep sorrow, confusion, and despair. Their long-awaited Messiah was dead. They were there when Jesus was crucified; they witnessed the darkness of the day as Jesus breathed his last breath and saw his body carried and being put away in the tomb. But when they came to the tomb, they found the stone rolled away, and when they entered, they did not find the body of Jesus.

Nothing was where it was supposed to be. Jesus’ lifeless body was placed there but now is gone. Imagine the rush of confusion and fear they felt when they found the tomb empty. I can hear their thoughts, “Who took the body?” with a grieving and angry tone.

Then, suddenly, they are startled by two angels, who asked them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen!”

Obviously, the women were not seeking the living; they sought a corpse. But instead, they encountered angels telling them, “Everything has changed!”

This moment, this question and statement, is the beginning of the new hope; it changes everything and makes all that is wrong right because it redirected them and redirects us today too from death to life. What they thought was the end became a beginning, a new journey.

Think of a railway switch, for example (see picture). A railway switch is equipment that enables railway trains to be guided from one track to another. One minor change at the right time and the direction of that train, however long it might be, changes completely.

What the angels said to the women was simple and direct, yet the most consequential knowledge in their lives: death is not the end. By Jesus overcoming death, he changed the final destination: he switched the railway from death to life. Death is no longer the end of life but a passage to everlasting life.

How does this knowledge change you? How different would you live your life knowing you are not alone, that you are meant to be and do good, to enjoy life right now despite the struggles, and that this life is a journey that continues beyond what we know?

Knowing Jesus is alive, that everything he said and taught was true, empowers us to live lives of goodness, sacrifice, love, and hope. It changes our mindset and view of life from “nothing matters!” to “this is a gift; I must do the best I can with it!” From “someday in the future” to “this real right now, this is the life!” Being with Jesus moves our hearts from contempt to gratitude, shame to joy, and pride to humility. It gives the power to ask for forgiveness and forgive others and makes a hope for a better life in the future a present hope that we can get to experience right now without having to wait.

This is how Easter reorients us from death to life; it makes people of the resurrection. This is the “railway switch” to us. Because of Jesus, we can live life today like people who will be raised to life again. And as people of the resurrection, we can live this life with anticipation for the future instead of fear of the end. In other words, Jesus wants us to live! (How dared him?)

My friends, the power of the resurrection is not an abstract idea but a tangible experience in our everyday living. In it, we are no longer bound by death or punishment but released for life to enjoy our days in and through grace.

When I say, “everything changes,” that is what I mean. We change into the people we were meant to be: kind, loving, forgiving, happy, courageous, generous, and just. Again, that is the “railway switch,” so to speak, that happens in our lives because of Jesus. That is the change.

One last point. After the angels told the women, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” they said, “Remember how he told you…”

These women had all the feels: fright, worry, sorrow, wondering, sadness, etc., and that is how they perceived reality at that moment, through their feelings. But now the angels are telling them, “Above your feelings, trust what he said.” As the angels were acknowledging the experience of their human loss, they were also redirecting them to what Jesus told them,

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

As we can see, Jesus had told them before what was going to happen and what it meant. So, the angels were essentially saying, “Jesus told you he would be gone and that he will be back. And he did. He went through all the trouble and suffering because he loves you. So, trust his love and in what he told you.”

Therefore, the first change that must happen in us to experience the joy and hope of the beautiful life Jesus offers us is to trust him by believing what he said and getting hold of it.

This is the good news: “Because Jesus lives, we can face tomorrow; because he lives, all fear is gone because we know he holds the future. This life is worth the living just because he lives!”

So, as we celebrate that Jesus was resurrected and is alive forevermore, let us also trust what he said and root our feelings and feeble hearts and minds in Jesus’ teachings so we can raise our families in Jesus’ ways, knowing and loving him, living in light of God’s promises.

Would you find life and joy in this life and the life to come? You can. If you are going in the wrong direction, let Jesus switch the railway in your life. God knows we all need a course correction from time to time. If you have forgotten or stumbled in your faith, fear not, you are remembered—you will always be.

Jesus changes everything. Amen.